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Housekeeper's Chat

September 11, 1930

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Changing the calendar." Information from the Weather Bureau, U.S.D.A.

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Vacation is over. Billy returns to school next Monday. Some of his playmates who live in nearby states went back to school the day after Labor Day. Aleen's older brother will be going back to college around the twenty-fifth of the month.

"I wonder why it is," I remarked to Uncle Ebenezer, "that nobody seems to start school the same day in the fall? I should think it would be so much more convenient for parents if schools and colleges began and ended at the same time. Then we could plan vacations, and trips, and shopping for school outfits, and so on."

"You've said it," answered Uncle Ebenezer, who is always a little slangy, as you may have noticed. "That's what the people think who are trying to change the calendar. Not specially with reference to schools, but for a great many business reasons."

Which reminds me that I was going to talk to my radio friends this month about the proposed new calendar of thirteen months. You remember I told you that Professor Marvin, who is chief of the Weather Bureau, is very much interested in these changes because they would greatly simplify the work of his scientists.

I'll give you the substance of what Professor Marvin told me about the suggested improvements.

To begin with, the calendar has been changed a number of times. Our present method of reckoning time dates only from the year 1852. England was late in accepting the Gregorian calendar, established by Rome in 1582. But in 1752 eleven days were suppressed to make the calendar agree with the Gregorian year. September 3 became September 14. The beginning of the year was moved to January 1, instead of being reckoned from March 25.

As short a time ago as 1923 the orthodox oriental churches decided to adopt the European calendar and dropped thirteen days from their calendar. As a result, for the first time in 350 years, Christmas and Eastern are officially celebrated by all nations on the same days after 1923.

The reasons for the changes in the calendar made by Gregory and adopted by England and the eastern churches was that having a leap year once in every four years as introduced by Julius Caesar added one day too many to the reckoning in each 1928 years. In the course of many centuries the extra days thus added caused the date of the equinox to go backward in the calendar toward January and in the time of Gregory 10 days too many had been added. The number increased

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to 11 days when England made its change and to 13 days when the change was made in the eastern churches.

For some time now the League of Nations has had a committee working on the matter of changing our present calendar to make it more convenient. The inequality of our months under the present system affects almost every angle of our lives. You can't compare October and February in a business, nor can you plan a family budget that will fit both months. The fact that interest periods vary in different months makes banking and other financial computations more complicated than need be. A great many kinds of statistics and scientific facts would be easier to secure and to use, if they were based on equal periods of time.

So the new calendar proposes to divide the year into thirteen months of exactly twenty-eight days or four weeks each. It has been suggested that the day left over at the end of the year could be an international holiday, called "Year Day", or something similar. It could be placed between the last day of the old year which would always be a Saturday, and the first of the new, always a Sunday.

The new or thirteen month might very well be inserted between June and July. Several extra days would be available at that season, following a change from our present division of the months to a 28-day system. "Sol", to indicate the summer solstice, is one of the names suggested for the new month. Once in four years it would be necessary to have a "Leap Year Day", which might be made an extra summer holiday, falling at a time when everybody would welcome one more day of vacation - in the summer time, after the 28th day of June.

How easily we could all swing into this new system of reckoning if it could be started when January first falls on a Sunday, as it does in 1933! It's hardly to be hoped, however, that such a momentous change will be brought about so soon, for, to be effective, it must be used by all the nations of the earth simultaneously. Some of them are not ready to give up their present way of reckoning. But it has proved a simple matter when changes have been made, as in 1923, to adjust people to them.

What a comfort it would be to know that one's birthday or wedding anniversary would always come on Tuesday, or that spring vacation from every school and college would always occur on a fixed day, since equal weekly and monthly periods would permit us to have equal quarterly divisions! Business firms like the idea of a quarter consisting of exactly 13 weeks, and of interest and accounting periods that are comparable for any two months of the year. It makes a difference now whether we get our pay by the week or by the month, or pay our rent by the month or the year. Under the proposed new calendar, these inequalities would be ironed out.

Of course, there are a few people now existing whose birthdays fall on the 29th, 30th, or 31st of the month by present reckoning, who will have to learn to date them from the first, second or third of the following month. Even this slight inconvenience will be removed in another generation, and a calendar change is a matter affecting all time as far as it can now be calculated.

The very first change proposed is to have a fixed date for Easter, the first or second Sunday in April, instead of changing its date to fit the phases of the moon. There has been a meeting of representatives of many

different churches for the purpose of considering this effort to put Easter in its place so to speak, and keep it there. The present method of setting its date is found in the Episcopal prayer book and any standard dictionary. "The first Sunday after the full moon which happens upon or next after the twenty-first of March," is the rule, which of course indicates that the spring equinox is the starting point of the calculation.

Dear me! All my time used up and no menus or recipes for today. I'll just mention one bulletin - a brand-new one, called "Rabbit Recipes." Tomorrow I'll tell you more about it.

Friday: How to Cook the Delicious Domestic Rabbits.

The first part of the report is a general description of the project. It includes the objectives, the scope, and the methodology. The second part is a detailed description of the results. It includes the data, the analysis, and the conclusions. The third part is a discussion of the results. It includes the interpretation of the results, the limitations of the study, and the implications for future research. The fourth part is a summary of the report. It includes the main findings and the conclusions.